



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

C. Michael Krecek, R.S., M.A.
Director/Health Officer

Phone (989) 832-6380
Fax (989) 832-6628

**Testimony to the
House Regulatory Reform Committee
Provided by
Mike Krecek, Director/Health Officer Midland County
Department of Public Health and
President-Elect Michigan Association for Local Public Health
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Dear Chairman Johnson, Members of the Committee and Colleagues:

My name is Mike Krecek and I serve as the Health Officer for the Midland County Department of Public Health. In addition, I'm the President Elect for the Michigan Association for Local Public Health, also known as MALPH, representing Michigan's 45 local health departments.

I am here today to provide information and testimony on smoke-free legislation regarding specific experiences from my own jurisdiction and to represent the position of Michigan's local public health departments on this important legislation.

The Midland County Experience

The Midland County Board of Commissioners passed a Clean Indoor Regulation in January 2006 for public places, excluding bar and restaurants, with the Public Health Department as the enforcement agency. We utilize a complaint-based system similar to many other communities with clean indoor air policies and have had little trouble with increased volume of workload or enforcement. During the first year, there was a community education component and approximately 20 complaints registered. That number has decreased each year since with most people willing to comply.

Results from a Behavioral Risk Factor Survey found our adult smoking rates at 20.8% in late 2006, down 4.3% from the 2002 figures. We attribute much of this success to educational efforts by the Midland County Tobacco Reduction Coalition and our many community partners on the hazards of smoking and second hand smoke. The Regulation is also likely to be part of the reason for this success.

Statewide

In Michigan, most recent data identifies 22 counties and four cities with a clean indoor air regulation or ordinance. Total coverage is approximately 47% of the State's population. Bars and restaurants are excluded due to State preemption.

Health Considerations

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) lists **smoking** and **second hand smoke exposure** as the two leading causes of preventable death. While we have long known about effects of tobacco with cancer, asthma and other respiratory diseases, more recent studies shown strong associations to heart disease.

Pueblo, Colorado – January 2009

Smoking ban in one Colorado City led to a dramatic drop in heart attack hospitalizations within three years, a sign of just how serious a health threat secondhand smoke is, government researchers said Wednesday. The study, the longest-running of its kind, showed the rate of hospitalized cases dropped 41 percent in the three years after the ban of workplace smoking in Pueblo, Colo., took effect. There was no such drop in two neighboring areas, and researchers believe it's a clear sign the ban was responsible.

Public Health can positively impact spiraling health care costs if investments are made in health promotion and disease prevention services. "According to CDC estimates, we annually spend \$1.21 per person on disease prevention, and \$1,390 per person on disease treatment. We can and must reverse this trend."

Unfortunately, funds such as tobacco tax collections, that could and should be supporting public health promotion and disease prevention, have historically been diverted elsewhere. Other states, like New York and California, that used these funds for public health initiatives are reaping the rewards with lower disease incidence and a healthier population.

Economic Considerations

With 75-80% of Michigan citizens being non-smokers it only makes sense that eliminating smoking in public places would be good for business. Below are some comments from Public Sector Consultants from April 2008 regarding this issue.

Passage of statewide smoke free legislation would be a low cost way to invest in health promotion and disease prevention. I did say, "Low cost" not "no cost". There is a monetary cost to providing any new service, and this would be no exception. However, local public health departments maintain a presence in each of the counties in Michigan and could implement enforcement rather easily and at limited expense.

Public Sector Consultants, a Lansing-based policy research firm, today unveiled an analysis of House Bill 4163 showing no net economic impacts if Michigan adopted a statewide smoke free worksite policy that includes restaurants and bars. Ken Sikkema, senior policy fellow at PSC and former senate majority leader, unveiled the report to Capitol reporters during a media roundtable entitled "Smoke free workplaces: The Impact of House Bill 4163 on the Restaurant and Bar Industry in Michigan". In conducting their research PSC reviewed dozens of published studies, legislation in other states, public polls and Michigan's legislative history on the issue.

Highlights of the report include:

- Compelling scientific and health evidence supporting elimination of secondhand smoke exposure for all workers;
- No net economic impact on Michigan restaurants and bars;
- Increasing public support for smoke free air policies statewide and nationwide;

Government interest in protecting state residents from secondhand smoke exposure dates back more than 20 years and does not constitute unwarranted regulation of businesses.

MALPH Priorities

Some of you have already heard or seen testimony from public health officials about the dire state of public health funding in Michigan. Jean Chabut from the Department of Community Health, Cathy Raevsky, Kent County Health Officer and others have offered strong testimony to this issue. While the focus today is smoke free legislation, funding concerns remain a huge public health challenge.

MALPH has identified the following areas for policy efforts:

1) Adequate State Funding for Required Public Health Services

Michigan's public health code, (Public Act 368 of 1978), states that the costs of state required public health services shall be shared equally by state and local governments.

- A) Hold state and local public health harmless in the Department of Community Health budget reductions for fiscal year 2009
- B) Insure the full reinstatement of revenue sharing.
- C) Provide additional local public health funding for fiscal year 2010.

2) Smoke Free Workplaces

MALPH supports legislation that requires workplaces in Michigan become smoke free. Our preference would be for no exclusions.

3) Healthy Michigan Fund

Preserve or increase in funding to state and locally based "prevention focused" services supported by the Healthy Michigan Fund. Prevention is cost-effective and can reduce health care costs.

Thank you for this opportunity to present the perspectives of the local public health community. I would be pleased to work with you in any manner you deem appropriate.

Very Truly Yours,

C. Michael Krecek RS, MA
Director/Health Officer
(989) 837-6574
mkrecek@hline.org





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Describing Local Public Health in Michigan

Local public health is one of the most important agencies in each of your districts. Our 45 local health departments in partnership with key State agencies form the framework of a public health network for all of Michigan.

We are the one's that vaccinate children against diseases, inspect restaurants to assure safe meals are served, test water for safety and educate the community on healthy practices. We are also the dental clinic, the family planning clinic, the pre-natal care coordinator, the children's medical consultant and safety net for the most needy of our citizens.

Local public health agencies investigate diseases, such as an e-coli or norovirus outbreak, so that it's quickly controlled and the impact minimized. We also prepare our communities to respond to a public health emergency such as pandemic flu.

We also monitor the health status of our communities and collaborate with others to assure our citizens have the opportunity to be healthy and the chance for a high quality of life.

We do all this and more with minimal support from the State and some federal support, but significant funding comes from local fees and local investment.

Local public health departments impact every citizen in Michigan, and we do it effectively and efficiently in each of your districts.